

# Eye allergies and contact lenses

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BRAND CONTACT LENSES  
INNOVATION FOR HEALTHY VISION™



Allergy is a common hypersensitivity disorder that affects 15-20 percent of the population in Europe, and is estimated to increase to 50 percent by 2015.<sup>1</sup>

In the United Kingdom, approximately one in three are affected at least once in their lives by seasonal allergy.<sup>2</sup> Children, teenagers and young adults are more often affected by ocular allergy.<sup>3</sup> Recent research suggests that ocular allergies may be two to four times more common than nasal symptoms alone.<sup>4</sup>

For people who suffer from eye allergies, symptoms such as itchy eyes, tearing and redness have been shown to be troublesome enough to interfere with quality of life, affecting leisure time and sports activities, school performance and even productivity on-the-job.<sup>5</sup>

For many of the UK's four-million contact lens wearers, allergy season can be particularly challenging. Patients with a history of eye allergies have a higher incidence of contact lens-related discomfort.<sup>6</sup> This increase in incidences of lens discomfort causes many contact lens wearers to use rewetting drops more often, wear their contact lenses less frequently or switch back to glasses.

Potential contact lens wearers and new wearers may think they are not suitable candidates for contact lens wear.

But, according to most Eye Care Professionals, with the optimum choice of contact lenses and wearing schedule and, when necessary, appropriate prescribed medication, many allergy sufferers should be able to successfully wear contact lenses, even through the worst allergy season. This guide offers advice and tips on how to increase the likelihood of successfully wearing contact lenses even if you suffer from allergies.

This guide is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Your Eye Care Professional can help you better understand how to get the full benefits of your contact lenses and reduce your chances of developing problems that could affect your vision and the health of your eyes.

# Advice for contact lens wearers who suffer from allergies

There is no one solution for any contact lens wearer experiencing eye allergies. But, small changes to your everyday routine can add up to big relief during allergy season. Here is some advice from Eye Care Professionals and experienced contact lens wearers. Talk to your Eye Care Professional about what is best for you.



- Studies have shown that daily disposable contact lenses (worn for one day and removed prior to sleeping) can be a healthy option for contact lens wearers in general, and can be ideal for some people with eye allergies. By putting in a clean, fresh contact lens every day, daily disposable contact lenses minimise the potential for accumulation of allergens and irritants that can often accumulate with repeated use of the same pair of lenses. They also eliminate exposure to the disinfectants and preservatives in some lens cleaning solutions – which themselves may lead to additional ocular irritation for some wearers. In addition, daily disposable contact lenses are less time-consuming and more convenient than lenses that are reused.
- Certain contact lens care systems contain preservatives which, although safe and effective, may further worsen the symptoms and related discomfort for some allergy sufferers. If you use daily wear, reusable contact lenses (two- or four-week replacement), talk to your Eye Care Professional about which lens care cleaning system is best for you, such as preservative-free alternatives.
- Don't sleep in your contact lenses. Most build-up will occur within overnight wear, particularly with extended wear of contact lenses. Contact

lens wearers should never wear lenses beyond the period recommended by their Eye Care Professional. People who wish to keep their contact lenses in while sleeping should first talk to their Eye Care Professional to determine if overnight wear of contact lenses is appropriate for them. If you are experiencing ocular allergy, the extended wear of contact lenses is not advised.<sup>7</sup>

- Consider wearing your contact lenses in particular, daily disposable contact lenses, “part time” (eg, for sports, social events) during peak allergy season. Make sure you have a backup pair of spectacles.
- Don't rub your eyes if they itch. Talk to your Eye Care Professional or doctor about preservative-free artificial tears or prescribed allergy drops to see if they might help alleviate your symptoms. Temporary cessation of contact lens wear may be needed if symptoms are severe or persistent.
- Find out what causes your allergy and try to avoid the trigger. If pollen is what bothers you, try to stay indoors and minimise the amount of time you are in the wind, which blows allergens around.
- If your eyes become red, painful or if vision changes, remove contact lenses and seek immediate professional care.

Clinical research has shown that, when worn on a daily disposable basis, 1-DAY ACUVUE® Brand Contact Lenses and other daily disposable etafilcon A contact lenses such as 1-DAY ACUVUE® MOIST® Brand Contact Lenses and 1-DAY ACUVUE® MOIST® Brand Contact Lenses for ASTIGMATISM may provide improved comfort for many patients suffering from mild discomfort and/or itching associated with allergies during contact lens wear, compared to lenses replaced at intervals of greater than 2 weeks.<sup>8</sup>



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